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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1911.

A Public Utilities Law.

Commissioner Rudolph is undoubtedly
correct in his assertion that the en-
actment of a public utilities law would
be of great advantage to the citizens of
the District.

It is a matter of comparatively little
importance whether the regulation of
these utilities is given to a commission
especially appointed for the purpose, or
whether the work shall be entrusted to
the District Commissioners. The latter,
it is true, have already a multiplicity
of duties to perform, but if Congress
should deem it wise to add this addi-
tional labor, they will do their duty
well. We may expect both the present
board and their successors to act with
fairness, both to the citizens and the
corporations.

The one important fact is that some-
where there should be some authority
to investigate complaints of inadequate
service and excessive rates. This au-
thority should not be restricted except
to the usual extent of allowing judicial
review. If such power were lodged to-
day in the District Commissioners or a
public utilities commission, the problem
of the universal transfers would be
promptly solved and many other ques-
tions settled. Nearly every State and
municipality in the United States has
found it necessary to enact public utility
laws, and the result has been most
satisfactory. Men like Theodore N.
Vail, the head of the telephone com-
pany, who have a keen and wide grasp
of public affairs, have no hesitation in
asserting that the time has come when
regulation of public utilities is a reason-
able and legitimate demand.

The result of the recent elections
demonstrates that the people every-
where are determined to exercise inde-
pendent power. While the people of the
District cannot of themselves enact
needed laws, they have faith that Con-
gress will not be unduly influenced
against granting a measure of practical
value to this community.

The apple growers say the country
would be greatly benefited if every per-
son ate five apples every day. It cer-
tainly ought to make it fruitful.

An Unpleasant Surprise.

It is not surprising that the action of
the Commerce Court in granting an in-
junction against the reduction of freight
rates ordered by the Interstate Com-
merce Commission should meet with
considerable disapproval on the part of
the public. The action of the commis-
sion was taken after a lengthy examina-
tion into conditions in the Western
States and promised relief to thousands
of shippers. It is now evident that the
question has become involved in pro-
longed and tedious litigation.

Apart from the issue attached to this
particular case, the fact which appeals
to the general public is that the Inter-
state Commerce Commission is relegated
to a purely subordinate position. Its
power has been absolutely shorn. After
many years of admirable work, during
which it has gained great prestige by
its industry, excellent judgment, and
keen regard for public interests, it be-
comes nothing more than an advisory
board, whose orders are to be disre-
garded until they have run the gamut
of a lengthy contest.

It is not exaggerating to say that the
American people had grown to respect
the Interstate Commerce Commission.
To find that it has been displaced and
handicapped in its excellent work is an
unpleasant surprise.

If China needs an inquisitor, we do not
see how it could find one more inquisitive
than Dr. Wu Ting-fang.

A National Merchants' Association.

The suggestion made at the banquet
of the Retail Merchants' Association to
form a national organization composed
of affiliated retail merchants is one that
should receive serious consideration.
This getting together of our retailers is
a comparatively new idea. State so-
cieties are being formed rapidly, be-
cause the experience of those already
in existence has proved to be of such
great value to members, as well as to
the people of their respective communi-
ties, that merchants everywhere are be-
ginning to realize the value of united effort.

A significant fact in this connection
is that there has been practically no
abuse of power gained through organi-
zation. The State or municipal legisla-

tion which has been sought has been
reasonable and has, therefore, been en-
acted. In addition, these associations
have put trade upon a better basis, have
eliminated abuses of discrimination be-
tween classes of buyers, and have es-
tablished better relations between the
consumer and the merchant and be-
tween the dealers themselves.

With a national organization having
headquarters in Washington, the mer-
chants of the country would be in a
position to give wider effect to the ben-
efits they are beginning to enjoy.

It is lucky that we do not all have to
live on our per capita.

New Assessing Laws.

The laws relating to assessments
which Representative George, a mem-
ber of the House District Committee,
will advocate at the next session, and
which he outlines in The Washington
Herald this morning, will receive gen-
eral commendation among District citi-
zens. Two of his propositions, the
separation of excise jurisdiction from
the assessment board and the substitu-
tion of annual for triennial valuations
of property, have already been sug-
gested by the District Commissioners and
are most desirable. His other sug-
gestions, looking to larger publicity in
the matter of assessments, so that the
property owner will be occasioned the
minimum of dissatisfaction, will also
commend themselves to the general public.
The amount of expense which they
will add to the municipal adminis-
tration will be inconsiderable compared
with the benefit which they will afford.

We feel certain that the people of
Washington will appreciate the interest
which Mr. George is thus mani-
festing in local affairs. He has gone
to work in a fashion which indicates
friendly concern, as well as a full mea-
sure of his responsibility as a mem-
ber of the District Committee. Instead
of projecting unconsidered and imprac-
tical legislation into the House, he has,
through conferences with the Commis-
sioners, made himself acquainted with
the details of administration and has
striven to remedy real deficiencies.

If every member of Congress directly
intrusted with participation in our local
government would act with the same
tact, intelligence, and sympathy, we
would have reason to rejoice.

The trouble with Boss Cox was he
didn't get enough converts.

The Tobacco Trust Reorganization.

The advance in the price of tobacco
stock indicates that the reorganization
which has been approved by the Federal
court in New York is not regarded as
destructive to business. As a matter of
fact, the independents complain that lit-
tle or nothing has been accomplished
in the way of breaking up the monopoly.
This, however, is a matter for the fu-
ture to decide. For the present it is
reassuring to business to know that
compliance with the anti-trust law does
not mean disruption or bankruptcy.

There is no confiscation of property and
the stockholders do not suffer undue
penalty.

The main point covered by the Sher-
man law is that there shall be no con-
spiracy in restraint of trade. It is be-
lieved that the purpose of the law has
been fully achieved by preventing the
new companies from having directors
or officers in common, from employing
the same selling or purchasing agents,
and by limiting the holdings of property
or stock. In the main the drastic
suggestions of the Attorney General,
including the five-year probationary
proposition, have not been followed.

This does not mean, however, that the
companies are entirely immune from
future prosecution. They still must face
the law, and if their conduct comes
within its scope they may expect the
government to bring them to the bar
of justice. They must not conspire to
restrain trade, they must not resort to
illegal methods to restrict competition.
If they do, after the warning which has
been given, their officers ought not to
complain if the criminal section of the
law is invoked against them.

In the meantime, reorganized busi-
ness will go ahead with the assurance
that the law can be obeyed without ne-
cessitating serious impairment of invest-
ed capital.

A Baltimore physician has been lectur-
ing on the baby problem. The Bishop of
London says the problem is to prevent
the diminution of the supply.

Washington's Public Library.

The annual report of the trustees of
the Public Library again reveals the need
of a better treatment of this important
institution by Congress. Owing to the
small pay, one-third of the personnel
has resigned within the year. The li-
brary has not been permitted to respond
as it should to the growing demands
made upon it. It is hampered in a way
in which a city of this size, not to say
a National Capital, should not be han-
dicapped.

Appropriations for the past three
years have decreased in proportion to
the District total, yet the work of the
library and its needs are growing con-
stantly. Congress ought to appreciate
the justice of the request for larger ap-
propriations.

After all this trouble licking the trans-
fer bill into shape, it would be a pity to
have it kicked by its opponents in Con-
gress.

A German professor says Americans
give themselves heart disease traveling
on elevators. They are more likely to
have it when they find the elevator is not
running.

After the McNamara trial, has dragged
along a few months longer, Americans

A Little Nonsense.

When fall comes, the scene of action takes
And summer's down,
You read about the chap who breaks
His collar bone.

This happens almost every day
When fall arrives,
And mortal risk in football play
Their precious lives.

The papers, too, when summer's done
Their tales compose,
About the chap who drags a gun
Across a fence.

But there's another tale which fall
Brings into line,
This is the saddest tale of all.
As we opine.

You know the doleful story of
The hapless man,
Who hid his money in the stove
Ere fall began.

The parlor stove-disaster dire!
You know the tale,
His wife proceeds to build a fire—
We draw the veil.

Uncle Pennywise Says:
Glee clubs are all very well in their
way, but in Boston they campaign with
a symphony orchestra.

Those Sad Gags.
"Why do you write so much cheer-up
verse?"
"To sort of offset my jokes," the press
humorist explained.

Familiar Statement.
Autumn leaves are getting scarce,
And the writer believes,
You will see this often ere
Autumn leaves.

Took Him Literally.
"I have beaten my sword into a plow-
share," remarked the young officer who
had resigned.

"Clear me!" exclaimed his sweetheart.
"I wanted that sword to decorate my
cozy corner with."

Consulting the Playwright.
"My star can wiggle his ears and
whistle through his teeth."
"Um."
"Now, can you build me a three-act
comedy around that?"

A Men's Friend.
"Will you loan me two dollars?"
"No."
"Then will you loan me your revolver
to commit suicide with?"
"No; you'd pawn it and get your two
dollars that way."

Europe and South America.
From Consul Reports.
Where one family went from Rio or
Buenos Ayres to Europe a few years ago
twenty go now. Perhaps it may not be so
many years before the South Atlantic
steamship business rivals the North At-
lantic in consequence. It has already
been pointed out that some of the finest
ships in the Italian Mediterranean lines
are running in the South American ser-
vice, and that the Lamport and Holt is
building three new steamships of the
highest class for it. The French line
from Marseilles has ordered two new ves-
sels fast enough to reduce the time of
the voyage to Rio to twelve days, and a
Hamburg-American liner of 15,000 tons
was launched last August. It is plain
that any chance the United States has
of commercial dominance in South Amer-
ica are rapidly passing by.

Hard on Male Jurors.
From the Philadelphia Press.
California should take warning. Three
women jurors on a panel in Washington
have appeal to the court to prohibit
their nine male associates from smoking
in the jury room. And the smoke nu-
isance is the least of the trouble imagin-
able in the handling of mixed juries.

From the Columbia S. C. Record.
The returns from the elections held yester-
day throughout the country are by no
means discouraging to the Democratic
party.

From the Chicago Examiner.
On the whole, the judicial vote, while
lighter than it should have been, is an
encouraging sign that the people are alert
to maintain a strong, clean judiciary.

From the Savannah News.
The elections were favorable to the
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the tariff measures passed by the Demo-
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When fall comes, the scene of action takes
And summer's down,
You read about the chap who breaks
His collar bone.

This happens almost every day
When fall arrives,
And mortal risk in football play
Their precious lives.

The papers, too, when summer's done
Their tales compose,
About the chap who drags a gun
Across a fence.

But there's another tale which fall
Brings into line,
This is the saddest tale of all.
As we opine.

You know the doleful story of
The hapless man,
Who hid his money in the stove
Ere fall began.

The parlor stove-disaster dire!
You know the tale,
His wife proceeds to build a fire—
We draw the veil.

Uncle Pennywise Says:
Glee clubs are all very well in their
way, but in Boston they campaign with
a symphony orchestra.